

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COPENH 03229 191726Z

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SUBJ: SPECIAL MEETING OF THE NORTH EAST ATLANTIC

FISHERIES COMMISSION, LONDON, DECEMBER 11-14, 1973

REF: STATE 228196

SUMMARY. THE NORTH EAST ATLANTIC FISHERIES COMMISSION
(NEAFC) FAILED TO ACHIEVE ITS PRINCIPAL GOAL, NAMELY
AGREEMENT ON A TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH (TAC) FOR THE NORTH
SEA HERRING FISHERY; HOWEVER, PROGRESS WAS MADE AND THE

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PAGE 02 COPENH 03229 191726Z

MATTER WILL BE PURSUED EITHER AT A SPECIAL NEAFC MEETING
OR A CONFERENCE CALLED BY THE UNITED KINGDOM TENTATIVELY

SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 11-13, 1974 IN LONDON. UNACCEPTABLE DANISH DEMAND ON ALLOCATION OF QUOTAS ON ADULT AND JUVENILE HERRING CATCHES WAS THE PRINCIPAL IMPEDIMENT TO AGREEMENT. THE COMMISSION AGREED ON A TAC OF 32,000 TONS. IN THE LESS IMPORTANT CELTIC SEA HERRING FISHERY. FULL DISCUSSION OF A TAC ON SOLE AND PLACE WAS PUT OFF UNTIL THE NEXT NEAFC MEETING. END SUMMARY.

1. NEAFC FAILED TO AGREE ON A TAC FOR THE NORTH SEA HERRING FISHERY, ITS PRINCIPAL GOAL AT THE MEETING. A SPECIAL WORKING GROUP HAD FOUND THAT THE HERRING RESOURCES WERE IN SERIOUS DANGER AND THAT A LIMITATION ON CATCH WOULD BE NECESSARY TO INCREASE THE STOCK SIGNIFICANTLY. FAILURE OF THE COMMISSION TO ALLOCATE A COUNTRY QUOTA ACCEPTABLE TO DENMARK WAS THE PRIMARY REASON FOR THE LACK OF AGREEMENT. THE SWEDISH DELEGATION LED THE FIGHT AGAINST INDIVIDUAL COUNTRY QUOTAS BASED ON ANY FORMULA THAT WOULD HAVE BENEFITED DENMARK AND OTHER COUNTRIES WHICH MAINTAINED OR INCREASED HERRING CATCHES AFTER 1970. MANY DELEGATIONS WERE RELUCTANT TO ACCEDE TO DANISH WISHES BECAUSE DENMARK WANTED A HIGH FIGURE FOR CATCHES OF JUVENILE HERRING WHICH THE DANES REDUCE TO MEAL AND OIL; SCIENTISTS HAVE STRESSED THE DANGERS TO THE OVERALL STOCK BY THE HEAVY FISHING OF JUVENILES. (NOTE: THE DANISH DELEGATION WAS PRESENT WITH ONLY A LIMITED MANDATE AND COULD NOT MAKE ANY COMMITMENTS.)

2. BELGIUM AND ICELAND STILL HAD NOT RATIFIED THE RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING ART. 7 (2) OF THE CONVENTION THOUGH BOTH INDICATED THAT ACCEPTANCE WOULD BE SOON. THE RECOMMENDATION, GIVING THE COMMISSION THE RIGHT TO ESTABLISH MEASURES CONCERNING TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCHES, MUST BE RATIFIED BY ALL MEMBER COUNTRIES.

3. SINCE ONLY A SLIGHT CHANCE WAS SEEN FOR IMPOSITION OF A TAC FOR 1974, THE COMMISSION HAD RECOMMENDED AT THE 1973 ANNUAL MEETING THAT THE CLOSED SEASON ARRANGEMENT ON THE NORTH SEA HERRING FISHERY PROVIDED FOR IN RECOMMENDATION (8) BE CONTINUED FOR 1974. AT THE SPECIAL MEETING, NORWAY AND DENMARK AGREED TO WITHDRAW OBJECTIONS WHICH HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY
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PAGE 03 COPENH 03229 191726Z

LODGED CONCERNING THE CLOSED SEASON AND THIS MEASURE SHOULD BE IN EFFECT FOR 1974. AS A CONSERVATION MEASURE, THE CLOSED SEASON HAS BEEN FOUND INADEQUATE FOR THE SPECIAL CONDITIONS OF THE NORTH SEA HERRING FISHERY, HENCE THE TAC PROPOSAL.

4. THE COMMISSION TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED A SPECIAL MEETING, MARCH 11-13, 1974, IN LONDON TO PURSUE THE TAC PROPOSAL IN ORDER TO FOLLOW UP ON THE PROGRESS MADE AT THE MEETING; THE PROPOSED NEAFC MEETING DEPENDS UPON RATIFICATION OF ARM7(2) BY BELGIUM AND ICELAND. IF THE TWO RATIFICATIONS ARE NOT

RECEIVED IN TIME, THE UNITED KINGDOM WILL HOLD A SPECIAL CONFERENCE OUTSIDE NEAFC TO PURSUE THE SAME AIMS IN THE TIME AND PLACE PROPOSED FOR THE NEAFC MEETING.

5. A TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH FOR THE CELTIC SEA HERRING FISHERY WAS APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION. THE TAC WAS SET AT 32,000 METRIC TONS OF HERRING; THE SCIENTISTS HAD SUGGESTED 25,000 TONS. ALLOCATION OF THE TAC WAS: IRELAND - 18,000; THE NETHERLANDS - 7,000; FRANCE - 5,000; AND OTHERS- 2,000 TONS.

6. DISCUSSION WAS BEGUN ON THE NEED FOR A TAC FOR THE SOLE AND PLAICE FISHERIES BUT DELEGATES, WEARIED BY THE LENGTHY AND DIFFICULT DEBATE ON THE NORTH SEA HERRING, DECIDED TO POSTPONE FURTHER ACTION TO THE NEXT MEETING. NEVERTHELESS, THE SERIOUS STATE OF, AND DANGER TO, THE SOLE AND PLAICE RESOURCES WERE UNDERLINED.
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